



PATENT COOPERATION TREATY

PCT

INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY REPORT ON PATENTABILITY

(Chapter II of the Patent Cooperation Treaty)

(PCT Article 36 and Rule 70)

Applicant's or agent's file reference Cal 89133	FOR FURTHER ACTION See Form PCT/PEA/416	
International application No. PCT/EP2005/001222	International filing date (day/month/year) 04.02.2005	Priority date (day/month/year) 23.02.2004
International Patent Classification (IPC) or national classification and IPC INV. F16L1/024		
Applicant SAIPEM ENERGY INTERNATIONAL S.P.A. et al.		
<p>1. This report is the international preliminary examination report, established by this International Preliminary Examining Authority under Article 35 and transmitted to the applicant according to Article 36.</p> <p>2. This REPORT consists of a total of 6 sheets, including this cover sheet.</p> <p>3. This report is also accompanied by ANNEXES, comprising:</p> <p>a. <input type="checkbox"/> sent to the applicant and to the International Bureau a total of sheets, as follows:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> sheets of the description, claims and/or drawings which have been amended and are the basis of this report and/or sheets containing rectifications authorized by this Authority (see Rule 70.16 and Section 607 of the Administrative Instructions).</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> sheets which supersede earlier sheets, but which this Authority considers contain an amendment that goes beyond the disclosure in the international application as filed, as indicated in item 4 of Box No. I and the Supplemental Box.</p> <p>b. <input type="checkbox"/> (sent to the International Bureau only) a total of (indicate type and number of electronic carrier(s)) , containing a sequence listing and/or tables related thereto, in electronic form only, as indicated in the Supplemental Box Relating to Sequence Listing (see Section 802 of the Administrative Instructions).</p>		
<p>4. This report contains Indications relating to the following items:</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Box No. I Basis of the report</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Box No. II Priority</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Box No. III Non-establishment of opinion with regard to novelty, inventive step and industrial applicability</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Box No. IV Lack of unity of invention</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Box No. V Reasoned statement under Article 35(2) with regard to novelty, inventive step or industrial applicability; citations and explanations supporting such statement</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Box No. VI Certain documents cited</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Box No. VII Certain defects in the international application</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Box No. VIII Certain observations on the international application</p>		
Date of submission of the demand 22.09.2005	Date of completion of this report 29.05.2006	
Name and mailing address of the international preliminary examining authority:  European Patent Office - P.B. 5818 Patentlaan 2 NL-2280 HV Rijswijk - Pays Bas Tel. +31 70 340 - 2040 Tx: 31 651 epo nl Fax: +31 70 340 - 3016	Authorized officer Mauriès, L Telephone No. +31 70 340-4356 	

**INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY REPORT
ON PATENTABILITY**

International application No.
PCT/EP2005/001222

Box No. I Basis of the report

1. With regard to the language, this report is based on
- ☒ the international application in the language in which it was filed
 - ☐ a translation of the international application into , which is the language of a translation furnished for the purposes of:
 - ☐ international search (under Rules 12.3(a) and 23.1(b))
 - ☐ publication of the international application (under Rule 12.4(a))
 - ☐ international preliminary examination (under Rules 55.2(a) and/or 55.3(a))
2. With regard to the elements* of the international application, this report is based on *(replacement sheets which have been furnished to the receiving Office in response to an invitation under Article 14 are referred to in this report as "originally filed" and are not annexed to this report)*:

Description, Pages

1-9 as originally filed

Claims, Numbers

1-16 as originally filed

Drawings, Sheets

1/6-6/6 as originally filed

- ☐ a sequence listing and/or any related table(s) - see Supplemental Box Relating to Sequence Listing
3. ☐ The amendments have resulted in the cancellation of:
- ☐ the description, pages
 - ☐ the claims, Nos.
 - ☐ the drawings, sheets/figs
 - ☐ the sequence listing (*specify*):
 - ☐ any table(s) related to sequence listing (*specify*):
4. ☐ This report has been established as if (some of) the amendments annexed to this report and listed below had not been made, since they have been considered to go beyond the disclosure as filed, as indicated in the Supplemental Box (Rule 70.2(c)).
- ☐ the description, pages
 - ☐ the claims, Nos.
 - ☐ the drawings, sheets/figs
 - ☐ the sequence listing (*specify*):
 - ☐ any table(s) related to sequence listing (*specify*):

* If item 4 applies, some or all of these sheets may be marked "superseded."

**INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY REPORT
ON PATENTABILITY**

International application No.
PCT/EP2005/001222

Box No. V Reasoned statement under Article 35(2) with regard to novelty, inventive step or industrial applicability; citations and explanations supporting such statement

1. Statement

Novelty (N)	Yes: Claims	3 - 6, 8, 9, 12 - 16
	No: Claims	1,2,7,10,11
Inventive step (IS)	Yes: Claims	
	No: Claims	1-16
Industrial applicability (IA)	Yes: Claims	1-16
	No: Claims	

2. Citations and explanations (Rule 70.7):

see separate sheet

Box No. VII Certain defects in the international application

The following defects in the form or contents of the international application have been noted:

see separate sheet

**INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY
REPORT ON PATENTABILITY
(SEPARATE SHEET)**

International application No.

PCT/EP2005/001222

Re Item V.

1. Reference is made to the following document:
D1: US-A-4147455
D2: US-A-4929124
D3: US-A-4265566

2. The present application does not meet the criteria of Article 33(1) PCT, because the subject-matter of claim 1 is not new in the sense of Article 33(2) PCT.
The document D1 discloses (the references in parentheses applying to this document):
a method for (interpreted as "suitable for", see PCT Guidelines Part II, 5.23) triggering and controlling the lateral buckling of underwater pipelines (2) by the installation of supporting systems (1) positioned in certain points of the seabed, wherein the upper surfaces (3) of said supports, on which the pipelines rest, are tilted with respect to the horizontal plane, transversally with respect to the direction of said pipelines.

3. Dependent claims 2 to 10 do not contain any features which, in combination with the features of any claim to which they refer, meet the requirements of the PCT in respect of novelty and/or inventive step, the reasons being as follows:
 - 3.1 Concerning claims 2, 7 and 10: the additional features of these claims are disclosed in D1, see e.g. fig. 1, 4.
 - 3.2 Concerning claim 3: the additional feature of this claim is known from D2, see e.g. fig. 2B.
 - 3.3 Concerning claims 4 - 6, 8, 9: the additional features of these claims appear to relate to simple constructional measure either generally known or suggested by the available prior art.

- 3.4 It would be obvious to the skilled person to combine for the same purpose, in accordance with circumstances, the additional features of claims 2 to 10 with the known features of document D1, without the exercise of inventive skills, in order to solve the problem posed.
4. The subject-matter of claim 11 is not new in the sense of Article 33(2) PCT. The document D1 discloses (the references in parentheses applying to this document): A support (1) for (interpreted as "suitable for", see PCT Guidelines Part II, 5.23) the resting of underwater pipelines (2) for the triggering and control of lateral buckling of said underwater pipelines essentially consisting of a structure, positioned on the seabed, with a simple or lattice framework (3, 4, 5) with suitable foundations, wherein the upper surface(s) (3, 10), where the pipeline is rested, are tilted transversally with respect to the direction of said pipeline.
5. Dependent claims 12 to 16 do not contain any features which, in combination with the features of any claim to which they refer, meet the requirements of the PCT in respect of inventive step, the reasons being as follows:
The additional features of these claims are a matter of normal design procedure either known from or suggested by the available prior art, see for example document D3, fig. 3 and 4 for claims 12, 15 and 16; D2 fig. 2A and 2B for claims 13 and 14. Their inclusion in the support structure described in D1 would therefore be an obvious design possibility for the skilled person in order to solve the respective problems posed.

Re Item VII.

1. The features of the claims are not provided with reference signs placed in parentheses (Rule 6.2(b) PCT).

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